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General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

94th plenary meeting
Thursday, 20 July 2006, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Diarra (Mali), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Earthquake in the Indian Ocean

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I should like, on behalf of all the members of the General Assembly, to extend our deepest sympathy to the Government and the people of Indonesia for the tragic loss of life and material damage that have resulted from the recent earthquake in the area.

May I also express the hope that the international community will show its solidarity and respond promptly and generously to any request for help made by that country.

Agenda items 117 and 120 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): Members will recall that the General Assembly held a joint debate on agenda items 9 and 117 at its 47th and 50th plenary meetings, on 10 and 11 November 2005.

Members will recall also that the General Assembly held the High-level Plenary Meeting on agenda items 46 and 120 at its 2nd and 4th to 8th plenary meetings, on 14 to 16 September 2005, and also adopted a number of resolutions under those two items.

With regard to items 117 and 120 of the agenda, the President of the General Assembly indicated, in his letter dated 27 June 2006, that it would be necessary to continue consideration in plenary of those items on a date that would take into account the programme of the General Assembly. He also stressed, recalling the recommendation made by the 2005 world summit, that the issue of Security Council reform was an essential aspect of the process of United Nations reform.

On 20 April 2006, Member States were able to discuss this important question in the framework of the Open-ended Working Group charged with considering the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

The significant number of States inscribed on the list of speakers is evidence of the General Assembly's interest in, and commitment to, seeking a solution that would meet with the broadest possible consensus. I hope, therefore, that we will have a fruitful and constructive debate.

Mr. Yousfi (Algeria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group.

At the outset, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for having convened this plenary meeting devoted to

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the important topic of the reform of the Security Council. This gathering provides us with an opportunity to restate the African common position on the reform of that body as outlined in the Ezulwini consensus, contained in the Sirte Declaration and reaffirmed at the Khartoum and Banjul summits. But first at all, I would like to underline some of the guiding principles of our approach.

First, the reform of the Security Council is an important and integral part of the wider reform process of the United Nations. Secondly, in order to enhance the Council's legitimacy, effectiveness and capacity to address threats and challenges to international peace and security, the reform must be comprehensive in addressing both the expansion of its membership and the improvement of its method of work and decision-making so as to achieve greater transparency and accountability.

Thirdly, Africa is determined to redress the historical injustice of being the only continent lacking representation in the permanent member category of the Security Council and to ensure its legitimate right to be fully represented in all decision-making organs of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council.

With regard to the elements of the African common position, it is worth noting that the Ezulwini consensus clearly stated that, as far as Africa is concerned, full representation means no fewer than two permanent seats with all the prerogatives and the privileges of permanent membership, including the right of veto, and five non-permanent seats — that is to say, two additional seats for Africa. The selection of Africa's representatives in the Security Council, as well as the question of the criteria for the selection, should be the responsibility of the African Union.

In the spirit of achieving those objectives while contributing to the reform the Security Council based on the principles of democracy and equitable representation of all geographical regions, the African Group submitted draft resolution A/60/L.41 during the Assembly's current session.

On that basis, the African Group is ready to engage in a constructive dialogue with the entire membership in order to achieve a Security Council reform that meets Africa's legitimate aspiration, as well as those of other regions — a reform that, preferably, will enjoy consensus.

Mr. Martirosyan (Armenia): On behalf of the States members of the Group of Eastern European States eligible for non-permanent membership of the Security Council, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened this meeting.

It is the long-standing position of our Group that making the Security Council more representative and balanced and its work more effective and transparent is vital if we are to adapt the United Nations to the realities of the twenty-first century.

The issue of Security Council enlargement is of particular relevance to the Eastern European Group. Its member States are by any standards underrepresented in that body as currently structured. I remind the Assembly of the fact that since 1991 the Eastern European Group has more than doubled its membership, with, most recently, the Republic of Montenegro joining the United Nations as its one-hundred-and-ninety-second Member. It is therefore our common and long-standing position, expressed, inter alia, in the letter of the Chairman of the Group dated 28 February 2005 (A/59/723), that any increase in the non-permanent membership of the Security Council should ensure the enhanced representation of the Eastern European Group by allocating that Group at least one additional non-permanent seat in an enlarged Security Council.

We also believe that the existing regional groups should be retained for the purposes of the distribution of seats on and election to the Security Council.

Finally, let me express our hope that the momentum gained in the process of Security Council reform as a result of the 2005 world summit will be further strengthened and eventually lead to tangible results.

Mr. Matussek (Germany): This is my first time addressing the General Assembly as Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations. Let me say that I am grateful for this opportunity to participate in a discussion on one of the central elements of United Nations reform.

In the last few weeks, we have seen progress on a number of important reform issues. We have inaugurated the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. We are working intensively on mandate review and on creating system-

wide coherence. On management reform and budget reform, huge efforts are being made to come to an agreement.

All this is good; all this is commendable. And yet the more progress we make in those fields, the more the one big reform issue that we have not yet touched sticks out like a sore thumb.

United Nations reform without Security Council reform will not only be incomplete; it will not work. The reason for this is not that the Security Council is more important or on a higher level in terms of hierarchy than other United Nations bodies. The reason is that the work of the Security Council is interlinked with and affects the work of the whole of the United Nations. It is therefore with good reason that the summit last September called for "early reform of the Security Council".

We all know in our hearts that General Assembly revitalization and the reform of the working methods of the Security Council will not work without a reformed Security Council. Peacebuilding and peacekeeping will become more effective the more legitimate the Council's decisions are seen to be. To a very large extent, the outside world identifies the United Nations with its most visible organ: the Security Council. A United Nations that claims to have reformed itself without having brought the Security Council into the twenty-first century will continue to lose authority and credibility in the world.

We have been discussing Security Council reform now for over 15 years. Whatever the differences of opinion may be, there is overwhelming agreement that this reform is necessary and that we need a decision soon. The United Nations membership is also in agreement that reform of the working methods of the Council is not enough and that we need structural reform.

My colleagues in this Hall remember better than a newcomer like me the numerous attempts at reform of the working methods of the Council. Very good suggestions have been made in the context of the Open-ended Working Group and elsewhere, and on a number of recommendations broad agreement has already been reached, but we all know that those initiatives have not been implemented in a satisfactory manner so far. The so-called S-5 proposal on the working methods of the Council has the great merit of concentrating the most pertinent proposals and of creating a coherent approach to that part of reform. To a very large extent, the S-5 suggestions are also included in the G-4 proposal, but while there is compatibility on substance, we still have doubts on procedure. Will the S-5 proposals be effectively implemented if we do not achieve structural reform?

British Prime Minister Tony Blair recently said in a speech that the Security Council in its present form is no longer legitimate. It is also not as effective as it could be. To be legitimate and to be effective, the Security Council must represent the political realities of the twenty-first century; let major stakeholders, on which the implementation of Security Council decisions depends, participate in its decision-making; give the southern hemisphere an adequate say in Security Council matters; and commit to a meaningful reform of its working methods.

All that can be achieved only by a structural reform of the Council by enlargement in the categories of permanent and non-permanent members alike. At the fifty-ninth and sixtieth sessions of the General Assembly, we have seen that this conviction is shared by a large majority of United Nations Members. Indeed, the proposals now on the table of the General Assembly are all compatible in that sense. On the other hand, the ideas presented by the Uniting for Consensus group at the last session of the General Assembly have not been resubmitted. A general agreement to enlarge only the non-permanent category is not in sight, let alone a consensus, as the name of the group implies. Let us now put the missing pieces of United Nations reform into place and let us together find a way to make that reform reality. While we should all be forward-looking and not dwell on differences of the past, we need to recognize the results of intense interaction and debates of recent years. On that basis and with open-mindedness on all sides, reform can be achieved.

The issue is now to move on the proposals. Together with our partners in the G-4 and all those who have been supportive of Security Council reform in all regional groups, including Africa, we will continue to work to finally transform the fifteen-year discussion of Security Council reform into action. As we have said before, and as I stress again, we remain open to further discussing our reform proposal with all Member States genuinely interested in reform and to considering possible amendments with a view to broadening the basis of support.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): Today, and at a most appropriate time, the General Assembly has resumed its consideration of one of the most important aspects of United Nations reform: the reform of the Security Council.

In the past few days, the international community has witnessed and continues to witness tragic and regrettable events that clearly threaten international peace and security in many parts of the world — urgent crisis situations that the Security Council has failed to address for many political considerations, resulting mainly from the lack of unanimity among its permanent members, and consequently leading to the paralysis of the Council and its inability to undertake badly needed measures at the most appropriate time. That is why we should always keep in mind the interrelationship that exists between the current impasses in the work of the Security Council, on the one hand, and our efforts to expand the membership and improve the working methods of the Council, on the other.

Egypt is fully committed to the African common position, as outlined today by the Chairman of the African Group, the Permanent Representative of Algeria, and will remain committed to the positions taken and the proposals submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement.

In that connection, Egypt, like many other Member States, has constantly advocated the comprehensive reform of the Security Council. We have underlined again and again the need for the Council to reflect current political realities, with special emphasis on granting developing countries, in particular the African continent, their long-overdue and deserved representation in the permanent and non-permanent categories of Council membership. That is coupled with strong support for all ideas aimed at improving the working methods of the Council and at making it more responsive, transparent and open to the entire membership.

Some of the questions we have to address today relate to whether we attempt to make progress on both tracks, or limit ourselves to merely one track at the expense of the other? Does improving the working methods of the Council constitute a good enough outcome for our discussions? If so, what kind of improvement should we be aiming at and will it be adhered to by the Council?

While we support all endeavours aimed at improving the working methods of the Council, we note that those attempts still fall short of making meaningful changes in the Council's work in the direction of strengthening the principles of transparency and accountability. As we have noticed during the sixtieth session, the Council has increased its attempts to encroach on the prerogatives of the General Assembly. Instead of reflecting on the valid concerns raised by the majority of Member States on that very important issue, the Council has turned a blind eye and continued its attempts to address issues that fall exclusively under the purview of the General Assembly in accordance with the Charter.

Furthermore, many of us have raised valid concerns regarding the process of the selection of the Secretary-General. Those concerns did not and do not aim at undermining the role that the Council and its permanent members play in the selection process. They merely attempt to increase transparency in that process, based on the fact that any Secretary-General is a Secretary-General for the Organization and its entire membership, and not only for the Security Council. We expect serious efforts by the Council to increase the transparency in that process, far beyond informing the membership through the President of the General Assembly of the procedural aspects of the work of the Council on that issue.

In that regard, the General Assembly should also act on its own to develop a mechanism for the consideration of candidates to be recommended by the Security Council for appointment by the Assembly. That Assembly mechanism should include meetings with the candidate, and preferably a straw poll to determine his or her level of acceptability to the Assembly, in order to ensure that the candidate obtains the widest possible support from the entire membership of the Organization and that his or her official appointment by consensus at a later date is a true reflection of a transparent and democratic process.

In the meantime, concepts and suggestions aimed at addressing the question of increasing the membership of the Security Council on an incremental basis merit our consideration. The incremental approach to the expansion of Council membership should in any case fully take into account the legitimate right of Africa to be adequately represented in an expanded Council on the basis of the African common position as recently reaffirmed at the African

summit in the Gambia. Any proposal that falls short of providing Africa with the number and category of seats pursued by the continent will not succeed. In that context, we believe that the African draft resolution sponsored by Egypt on this matter provides for the only viable solution to end the inequity that characterizes the current composition of the Council.

Furthermore, while we support in principle the approach reflected in the draft resolution introduced by the group of five small nations (S-5), we stress the importance of moving simultaneously on the two tracks of reform. We strongly believe that the references contained in that draft resolution regarding the use of the veto are insufficient. The exercise of the veto should not only be curtailed in cases of genocide or massive crimes against humanity, but also must not be allowed in cases where a ceasefire between two belligerent parties is being pursued in any place in the world.

Moreover, we are convinced that the process of selecting the Secretary-General should not be subjected to the veto. We hope that the sponsors of the S-5 draft resolution will expand their consultations on the various aspects of the draft, so as to avoid any controversy and to fully take into account the African position that calls for both the improvement of the working methods of the Security Council and its expansion as parallel processes leading to its comprehensive reform.

The third, and last, question before us today is the future consideration of this issue by the Open-ended Working Group. While we share some of the frustration due to the lack of progress, we still believe that the Open-ended Working Group provides the only viable mechanism to deliberate upon the issue of Security Council reform. We do not support the idea of merely appointing co-chairpersons or facilitators to undertake informal consultations in the absence of a clear intergovernmental process that would allow for all Member States to be part of the process in our continued search for a creative solution that could satisfy all of us.

Finally, we cannot overemphasize the need to make reform and expansion of the Security Council an integral part of the United Nations reform agenda. That need is growing as events unfold throughout the world. Reform of the Council is needed in order to enhance the legitimacy of the Council's decisions and its ability to address the challenges of the twenty-first century more effectively and with a better understanding of the cultural and civilizational aspects of today's problems. Reform is needed so as not to allow individual Member States to implement Security Council resolutions on their own. Reform is needed to make the Council transparent and accountable. We need to ensure that all of us are part of the decision-making process on vital matters relating to international peace and security. Finally, we need a Security Council able to act when it comes to the protection of civilians and children in armed conflict — rather than just holding open debates on the matter, such as the one scheduled for next Monday, while failing to implement the letter and spirit of that protection because of political considerations.

Mr. Maurer (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The final document of the 2005 world summit, which was approved last September by all Member States, highlights the central role of Security Council reform. It also underlines the fact that that reform contains two distinct elements of equal importance, namely, enlargement in the membership of the Security Council and improvement of its working methods.

As part of the follow-up to the summit, Switzerland — together with its partners Costa Rica, Jordan, Singapore and Liechtenstein — prepared a draft resolution on the working methods of the Council. That text (A/60/L.49) was introduced on 17 March 2006 under item 120 of the Assembly agenda.

The measures proposed in the draft resolution are the result of discussions carried out over 10 years in the General Assembly. They concern in particular the following aspects: strengthening transparency in the decision-making process, particularly with regard to the work of the Security Council's subsidiary organs; increasing opportunities for countries that are not members of the Council to be able to participate in its work; intensifying consultations with troop-contributing countries, interested neighbouring States and regional organizations; making better use of experience acquired in the implementation of Council decisions; promoting the responsibility to protect by discouraging as much as possible the use of the veto in cases of genocide or crimes against humanity; establishing fair and clear procedures to enable persons affected by sanctions who believe that sanctions have been wrongly applied to present their points of view;

and facilitating the rapid integration of non-permanent members in the Council's work.

The draft resolution that we have put forth seeks to respond to the expectations of many Member States that would like to be more involved in the work of the Security Council. Those expectations are justified for the following reasons. All Members of the United Nations are concerned about the way in which the Security Council exercises its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. All Member States contribute, according to their capacities, to the financing of peace operations, and many countries contribute troops. All Member States have to implement the decisions taken by the Council under Chapter VII of the Charter.

I would also like to stress that improving the Council's working methods is also very much in the interest of the Security Council itself. By involving all Member States more closely, the Council strengthens not only the effectiveness of its action but also its legitimacy and its authority to act in the name of all.

The five countries responsible for the draft resolution all favour enlarging the Security Council, even though their views on the best model to follow are not identical. All five of us are firmly convinced that the Council must become more representative of the modern world. However, we also consider that the enlargement of the Council and the improvement of its working methods are two distinct goals that should be treated in parallel processes if possible, but separately. Unlike the enlargement of the Security Council, the improvement of working methods would not necessitate an amendment to the Charter of the United Nations. That is an area in which it is possible to achieve rapid progress, in the interest of all Member States of the Organization.

In the context of this important debate, Switzerland wishes to reaffirm and to explain its position with regard to the right of veto.

We realize that any modification of the right to veto would have to follow the tortuous route of an amendment to the United Nations Charter. We also realize that, with or without a veto, the support of the great Powers and their willingness to play an active part are essential to the success of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security. Finally, we acknowledge that the use of the veto has declined considerably since the end of the Cold War. Even so, it is unfortunately still the case that the right to veto continues to be used excessively and in an abusive manner. It is not acceptable that the use of the veto, or the threat to use it, should paralyze the United Nations in cases of genocide and crimes against humanity or in serious crisis situations that require resolute action by the international community.

The following explains the position that Switzerland advocates with regard to the veto in the ongoing debate on Security Council reform.

First, in the framework of improvements to the Security Council's working methods, Switzerland wishes to see rules put in place regarding a more selective use of the veto. Our draft resolution proposes two rules. The first would be to ask permanent members who oppose a draft resolution to explain their motives when they make use of their right of veto. The second would invite the permanent members to refrain from using the veto in situations of genocide, crimes against humanity and serious and systematic violations of human rights or of international humanitarian law. To formulate this rule is simply to translate into concrete terms a central element of the responsibility to protect that was adopted by the Member States at the 2005 world summit. It should be noted that the two rules that I have just mentioned do not affect the substance of the right of veto; and thus they would not necessitate a formal amendment to the Charter.

Secondly, whatever model is adopted for the enlargement of the Security Council, Switzerland, like many other countries, opposes the allocation of new rights of veto, because that would complicate even further the decision-making process within the Council and would pose an increased risk of paralysis.

We regret that in recent years the permanent members of the Security Council have refused to discuss or to act on the problematic aspects of the veto and have not taken seriously their responsibility to protect. This provides ammunition to all those who may think that the right of veto is not linked to a particular responsibility in the area of international peace and security but is simply a privilege that is used to defend particular interests. This contributes to a culture of inactivity in the face of certain crises, a fact that we, together with others, deplore.

Switzerland welcomes the fact that the Security Council reactivated the informal working group on documentation and on working methods last February.

I would like to seize this opportunity to thank Japan for its exemplary commitment in its capacity as chair of the working group. We note with satisfaction that specific measures have been decided, several of which are a direct response to the demands set out in the draft resolution of the group of five small nations — the "Small Five" (S-5). This is a first tangible and important step in the right direction.

We expect the Security Council to continue its work and in the coming months to address a number of other unresolved issues. I would like to mention three aspects that are particularly urgent.

The first is the use of the veto, where it is important and ultimately quite easy to establish the two rules mentioned above.

The second is the improvement of the working of the Council's subsidiary organs, in particular the sanctions committees. The demand for greater transparency and increased participation applies with regard not only to the Council's decision-making process but also to the work of the subsidiary organs. Too often the sanctions committees require a long time — sometimes several years — to take decisions and then do not communicate them, or do not communicate them correctly, to the States concerned. It is in the working of the subsidiary organs that the most serious problems regarding transparency occur, with regard to both the rules and procedures and the decisions taken.

The third area in which improvements need to be made rapidly is that of the procedures for establishing lists of persons and entities targeted by sanctions. It is not only necessary to improve those procedures but also to establish a satisfactory review mechanism that would enable those who claim that their name has been wrongly entered on a list to present their point of view. We hope that the thinking now going on in the Security Council will rapidly lead to tangible improvements.

We continue to believe that the best course of action would be to adopt and to implement the draft resolution that we have proposed. This resolution is legitimate, because it expresses the expectations of a large majority of Member States. It is pragmatic, because it asks the Security Council to consider a series of specific proposals in areas that have proved to be particularly problematic in recent years. It is flexible, because it establishes a framework for reform that can be enlarged or adapted in the course of implementation and because it encourages a dialogue between the Assembly and the Council on a subject of mutual interest. It conforms fully to the Charter, because it respects the distribution of responsibilities between the Assembly and the Council. It is useful, even if there is no absolute unanimity about the measures proposed, because it sends a strong political signal in favour of an improvement of the working methods. Finally, the draft resolution represents a first tangible step towards a more comprehensive reform of the Council. It facilitates discussion on enlargement and thus should be supported by all countries that wish for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

To conclude, I welcome once again the fact that the Security Council, following the submission of our draft resolution, has decided to take specific measures to improve its working methods. Switzerland will closely watch the Council's implementation of those measures and will be equally attentive to the manner in which the Council addresses other open issues, such as the use of the veto, the subsidiary bodies and fair de-listing procedures. We are convinced that our draft resolution would facilitate the reform of the Council's working methods. We will continue to follow this question closely together with our partners, while keeping open the option of asking the General Assembly to take action on our draft resolution.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): I wish to join my colleagues in thanking you, Sir, for this opportunity to, we hope, be able to advance the agenda of United Nations reform, including comprehensive reform of the Security Council. I will focus on just a few points, also in my capacity as the focal point for the Uniting for Consensus group.

The time is right for reform and, therefore, for negotiations. Uniting for Consensus is a strong believer in the need for negotiations — negotiations that we have never had. The time is now right for a truly fresh approach, not an exercise that will pretend to have a fresh approach but that at the end of the day will have been just an exercise in window-dressing. If we want to succeed, the negotiations will have to be pragmatic, inclusive and results-oriented, based on flexible positions and following a bottom-up approach, preserving, throughout the process and through non-divisive solutions that we will have sought and agreed upon, ownership by all Member States, be they main players or medium or small countries. Let us not forget that, for example, the small island developing States

alone constitute more than 20 per cent of the membership.

If the political will is there, if all of us come to realize that, after so many years of fruitless positioning, the time is right for at least allowing for an incremental type of reform, a reform that should not prevent further stages of reform in the future, based on more advanced and innovative principles — regional representation as such, for example — then I am sure that our common endeavour, with a win-win approach for everybody, could definitely and finally bring us to a breakthrough. It would thus allow all of us together to fruitfully engage in a process of bridge-building towards a non-divisive agreement on comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

As for today's consultations, I will not reiterate and illustrate here positions that at this point are well-known to everybody. As far as the Unity for Consensus Group is concerned, its positions have been on the record since July 2005, in document A/59/L.68, which was introduced in comprehensive statements by Ambassador Rock of Canada, Ambassador Akram of Pakistan and other colleagues (see A/59/PV.115). Those principles and those positions stand and are as valid today as they were one year ago. I thank my colleague from Germany, Ambassador Matussek, for giving me the opportunity to clarify once more why the Unity for Consensus has not submitted its proposal once more.

We have not submitted it because we did not want to risk the perception that we were injecting a dose of rigidity into the process. We want to facilitate matters, and we felt that re-submitting the draft resolution was not necessary. We want to set aside the "my product is better than yours" approach. I think that if we all just set aside attempts to sell our own approaches for a moment we could really be open-minded. That is the reason why, as we have said several times, we have not submitted something that contains ideas and positions that are as valid today as they were one year ago. I will not elaborate further on them, as I do not wish to duplicate what other colleagues will say.

What I would like to do here is to launch a strong appeal to the entire membership, to all my colleagues, to finally engage in negotiations, with a constructive and flexible approach. I think that it would be wise and would indeed favour a result-oriented approach to reflect along the lines indicated by Secretary-General Kofi Annan some weeks ago in his remarks during the lunch that, through the International Association of Permanent Representatives, we had organized in his honour.

There are three options before us concerning Security Council reform. The first is to do nothing, which everybody will agree is not an option. The second is to go on pursuing what would be, in our view, the optimal model of reform. That approach would imply, as far as substance is concerned, no flexibility in our negotiating positions, or just marginal flexibility. With such an approach, Kofi Annan told us, the result would be that we would go on discussing this for another five, 10 or 15 years. But the fact is that we need to have a more representative, democratic and accountable Security Council which would thus have more credibility and authority now, not 10 or 20 years from now.

That is why we have to seriously consider the third option, which is to focus with a pragmatic approach on the conditions and on those elements that will allow us to have early reform. May I recall that in certain respects a kind of early reform was the one traditionally advocated by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) as a fallback position. What does this kind of reform imply? It implies that we will not have to abandon what we consider to be the optimal reform.

What we will have to do is temporarily sideline from our radar screen of possible reforms those aspects on which, at this particular geopolitical juncture, it has been proved that we cannot succeed in building bridges across the membership at large. It is certain that we cannot afford the luxury of a divisive reform that would leave behind and demotivate one or other sector of the membership, thereby weakening the Organization.

On the contrary, we will have to strengthen in each and every one of us the feeling of pride of belonging to and owning this House. The strengthening of our ownership has to be the benchmark of any reform, and specifically also of a possible early reform, if the strengthening of the Organization is what we are aiming at.

If there is one fundamental principle that should always guide us in our search in good faith for a breakthrough on the issue of Security Council reform, that principle would indeed relate to the need to safeguard, also in this field, our ownership of this

House. We have here a principle that was reaffirmed in the final statement adopted at the Special Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 and China — which is to say the large majority of the membership: 132 countries out of 192 — held at Putrajaya, Malaysia, on 29 May 2006:

> "We affirm that the sovereign equality of Member States, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, must be respected, including throughout the reform process ... . Any attempt ... to exclude some Member States from contributing to the decision-making processes in the Organization contradicts the spirit and letter of the Charter." (*A/60/879, annex, para. 24*)

Along the same lines, Ambassador Kumalo emphasized in the press statement issued on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on 26 April that "The Group of 77 and China believes that the right of every Member State to have an equal say in the decision-making of the Organization must be upheld". It goes without saying that if that fundamental principle, based on the Charter, has to be applied to management reform, it should also apply to other fields of reform. There cannot be selectivity: "We like this principle for management reform, but we do not like it for Security Council reform".

Let us keep this principle at the centre of our aspirations when all of us engage in negotiations with a view to comprehensive Security Council reform. Our motto, should be, like that of migrants in their quest and endeavours for a better future and a better life, "courage, pride, dreams, achievements". That is precisely what this house is all about.

Mr. Maqungo (South Africa): We thank you, Ambassador Diarra, for convening this meeting. Our heads of State or Government in September committed themselves to continuing the efforts to achieve an early decision on reform of the Security Council and requested the General Assembly to review the progress thereof. This meeting is in line with that commitment.

The statement made by the Secretary-General that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without the reform of the Security Council remains true. The United Nations Charter has placed a significant responsibility on the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security. That responsibility gives the Council a far-reaching impact on the lives of many people in the world. That fact gives urgency to the efforts to expand and transform the Security Council.

South Africa believes that the objective of reform should be that of creating a Security Council which is truly representative of the membership and able to respond effectively to international crises, as mandated by the Charter of the United Nations.

This debate comes at a time when the threats associated with the current international security environment have exacerbated the difficulties confronting the Security Council. Those threats include, among others, the spread of terrorism and the fear of the use weapons of mass destruction. The crisis in the Middle East also contributes to that instability. However, the manner in which those threats are dealt with within the Council is still far from comprehensive. The exercise of the veto by the five permanent members makes the resolution of those threats a prerogative of the few. Therefore, the reformed Council should be able to address our collective security concerns in an even manner and be accountable to the entire membership of the United Nations.

There are various proposals on this issue and our view is that any proposal that seeks to reform the Security Council has to equally address both the enlargement and the improvement of its working methods. Those two aspects cannot and should not be separated. We need comprehensive reform that will make the Security Council more representative, more effective and more democratic. It is for that reason that my delegation is opposed to any approach that addresses only one element of the reform of the Security Council. Equally, any approach that seeks to differentiate between representation from other regions and representation from Africa will also not be appropriate. Africa has to be represented in the Security Council in the same capacity as other regions.

There have been calls to continue the discussion of the expansion of the Security Council within the Open-ended Working Group. The Working Group was established because Member States recognized the need to reform the Council, but we all know how disappointing it has been that, since its establishment, the Working Group has remained deadlocked, particularly on the vital issue of enlarging the Security Council. Therefore, when the heads of State took the decision to intensify the efforts to resolve that issue as part of the overall reform of the United Nations, they

were aware of the futile discussions in the Open-ended Working Group. By requesting this body to find common ground, the heads of States and Governments recognized that the Open-ended Working Group had outlived its usefulness and that a new reality had to come into place. The General Assembly would therefore be failing in its responsibility if it were to delegate the reform of the Council back to the same Open-ended Working Group.

The African Union summit in Banjul, the Gambia, reaffirmed Africa's demand of two permanent seats with veto rights and five non-permanent seats on the expanded Security Council. Africa's position is informed by the fact that, inter alia, it is the only continent without permanent representation in the Security Council, despite the fact that the agenda of the Council is predominantly Africa-related. However, we are also cognizant of the fact that the decision to reform the Security Council will have to be taken by the General membership of the United Nations. It is for that reason that we welcome this debate because it provides an opportunity for all of us to find common ground on the reform of the Security Council.

My delegation believes that, in the spirit of cooperation, the reform of the Security Council is possible. We hope that the political will displayed during the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council will prevail and enable us to address the imbalance within the Security Council. We, as Member States, have the responsibility to ensure that the Security Council remains the universal vehicle of our efforts in the maintenance of peace and security by taking that bold step to reform it. The time has come to arrest the erosion of the Council's credibility and to seek agreement on the composition and working methods of a reformed Council. Let us create a Security Council that will serve us all in the context of the new geopolitical realities.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): I should like to thank you, Sir, for convening today's plenary meeting. As President of the General Assembly Eliasson has continued to emphasize, reflecting the general view and sentiment of delegations, early reform of the Security Council is an essential element of our overall efforts to reform our Organization. In our view, the time for action is long overdue.

Our intensive follow-up work on the outcome document of the world summit has produced some significant results of which we should be proud. We have launched the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council, and adopted the implementing resolution on development. We have achieved partial success on management reform. While further work is necessary on other areas, such as mandate review, it is clear that Security Council reform stands out as the key unfinished institutional reform that we must now be ready to assault for a solution.

In the light of that, today's meeting is timely. It provides a good opportunity to review where we stand, to reaffirm the significance of the issue and to exchange frank views on the way forward. It is again pertinent to recall what Secretary-General Kofi Annan and many others have repeated: No reform of the United Nations would be complete without reform of the Security Council.

As we all know, there are two clusters of issues in Security Council reform: improvement of the working methods of the Security Council and the expansion of its membership.

First, on the working methods, the draft resolution presented by the G-4 countries last year contained specific provisions in that area. The S-5 draft resolution, submitted in March this year by five countries, proposes more ambitious measures. My delegation acknowledges that the S-5 draft resolution captured the wide attention of the Member States seeking improvement of the working methods of the Security Council.

Another development in the working methods issue is the actual work done within the Security Council through its subsidiary body, the Security Council informal working group on documentation and other procedural questions. In my capacity as the Chair of that working group, I wish to report here and now, on behalf of the Security Council members, on the achievements made so far on the joint work to improve the working methods of the Council.

> "The Security Council adopted, on 19 July 2006, a note by the President concerning the improvement of the working methods of the Council. The note is the product of intensive work on the part of the Security Council's informal working group on documentation and other procedural questions over the past several

months. Members of the Council have been actively engaged in those efforts to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work, as well as its interaction and dialogue with non-Council members as part of the follow-up to the outcome document of the 2005 world summit.

> "Members of the Council have committed themselves to implementing the measures set out in the note. The members of the Security Council will continue to consider ways to improve the working methods of the Council through the informal working group on documentation and other procedural questions."

I would like to add that the note contains, in a consolidated document, those specific and concrete measures which have been newly agreed this time, and those relevant rules, practices and understandings which have been agreed previously and put into practice since 1993. The said note by the President of the Security Council will be distributed shortly as an official document of the United Nations.

Speaking now in my national capacity, we regard the note as a modest but meaningful first step by the Council in the direction of improving its working methods. As the Chair of the working group until the end of the year, I will continue to work with members of the Council to pursue further improvement of its working methods in the implementation of paragraph 154 of the outcome document concerning working methods.

Secondly, on the question of expansion of the membership, we acknowledge that there still exist differences of position as regards the size, scope and modalities of expansion. In order to actually achieve Security Council reform, we need to develop a concrete proposal that overcomes some of those differences and thus is capable of garnering greater support than that afforded the G-4 draft resolution of last year. To that end, while deeply appreciating the support of countries for the G-4 draft, Japan has been conducting a series of intensive consultations with many interested Member States, including those that publicly opposed the G-4 draft resolution last year.

Japan continues to maintain the cooperation framework of the G-4. At this juncture, we are not yet able to offer any new proposal or specific modification to the original G-4 proposal. Nonetheless, we are determined to continue our efforts, believing that the time is approaching to restart the process of serious negotiations with a view to reaching a solution.

In the meantime, the issue of Security Council reform continues to be discussed by various groups and countries, including most recently by the African Member States on the occasion of the African Union summit held in Banjul, the Gambia. Although nothing new seems to have come out of the Banjul summit meeting, we note that African States remain seized of the matter at the level of heads of State. We hope that the time will soon come when all Member States on all sides — African as well as other States with important stakes in that issue — will begin to move actively and positively, with open-mindedness, flexibility and realism, in search of a solution that can enjoy the broad support of the membership.

Earlier this year, Prime Minister Koizumi stated in his policy statement at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, that:

> "We must realize United Nations Security Council reform without delay so that the African voice is heard more in the Security Council. We would like to strengthen collaboration with our African colleagues to this end."

More recently, we have also heard other leaders speak on that issue. We have noted with interest the remarks made by Prime Minister Blair of the United Kingdom in his speech on the matter at Georgetown University. In a recent joint communiqué, the United Kingdom and France expressed their continued support for Brazil, Germany, India and Japan as future permanent members, as well as for permanent seats for Africa. Japan is grateful for that statement of their position. On 29 June 2006, Prime Minister Koizumi and President Bush issued a join document, in which both leaders stated on the matter that:

> "Japan and the United States will intensify their cooperation, and work together in realizing Japan's permanent membership at the Security Council".

Japan is grateful to the United States for that strong support.

There are those, including G-4 countries and their co-sponsors and supporters, who have argued that Security Council reform should be achieved in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. On the basis of that idea, which enjoys the support of quite a

significant number of Member States, we intend to continue dialogue and constructive discussions with other interested States. The outcome of the accelerated progress should be a Security Council that is more broadly representative, efficient and transparent, with enhanced effectiveness and legitimacy.

We fear that if the political will for reform should wane, so too will the support given to our Organization itself diminish. There must be a proposal that is actionable and can enjoy the broad-based support of Member States. I should like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to those who have expressed their valued support for Japan. At the same time, we call on those Member States that support Security Council reform to work together with us to that end. We appeal to all Member States to give new impetus to the debate on Security Council reform. We ask them to reflect on constructive and, perhaps, creative ways to accelerate progress.

Building on the experiences gained during the sixtieth session, we should carry on and continue our deliberations with greater vigour at the sixty-first session, firm in the belief that the time is more than ripe for an important decision on that crucial matter.

Mr. Zoubi (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset sincerely to thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting on an issue of great importance, an issue that warranted many long discussions and negotiations resulting in many ideas regarding Security Council reform through the expansion of its membership and improvement of its working methods.

We know that United Nations reform must be a continuous and dynamic process if it is to address current developments. However, we stress the need to attain clear results that reflect our various consultations and debates in recent years. We see no harm in taking gradual and incremental steps that will lead us to our basic objective. Incremental reform of the Security Council through improving its working methods and expanding its membership can work by separating the issues in such a manner that we may proceed positively and make progress without prejudice to the importance attached to either of the two issues.

Allow me to reiterate the position of the Jordanian Government in support of the expansion of the Security Council's membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories on a democratic basis. I also wish to stress that the Jordanian Government also remains committed to the relevant proposals and ideas advanced by a group of Member States to the General Assembly during the past two years.

We attach great importance to the issue of reforming the working methods of the Security Council as quickly as possible. Jordan, together with Costa Rica, Liechtenstein and Singapore and with coordination by Switzerland, has put forward a number of specific proposals and ideas to guide the Council with regard to the reform of its working methods. Those ideas are set out in a draft resolution that was submitted several months ago (A/60/L.49). The five countries submitted the draft resolution as a response to the difficulties relating to the expansion effort and the fact that other draft resolutions have not dealt with its methods of work in a comprehensive manner. We believe that it is time to adopt a clear position on procedures and mechanisms so as to optimize the work of the Council and enhance its significant role in the service of the United Nations and the international community as a whole.

Our five countries are not trying to encroach on the Council's mandate. Rather, our initiative reflects our confidence in the importance of its work for the international community and for international law. Given the importance of the elements included in the draft resolution, we hope that they command considerable support among the Members of the United Nations and that the Council will take them into consideration.

The issues of the expansion of the membership of the Council and the reform of its working methods are of equal importance. However, we do not believe that linking them is advisable or that will lead to tangible progress. If we deal with those two issues separately, that could prove effective. If we take the necessary steps to improve the methods of work, that, in turn, could give momentum to the expansion of the membership.

Mrs. Chassoul (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): As in earlier debates on this issue, Costa Rica would like to take this opportunity to express its conviction that the Security Council needs comprehensive reform. The task before us is important and cannot be postponed, given that we must ensure that that body — an organ of limited composition — is transparent and democratic and based on the principle of rotation, and

that it has the effectiveness necessary to enable it to act on behalf of all Member States, in strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Since its first meeting, held on 24 January 1946, the Security Council has been developing and consolidating practices and habits that have, unfortunately, worked against the transparency, democracy, rotation and effectiveness that so many Member States are asking for, given the responsibility that members of the Security Council have to act on behalf of everyone.

Although, initially, some initiatives were put forward in an attempt to break with that tendency — leading, in particular, to General Assembly resolution 267 (III), adopted on 14 April 1949 — the Security Council has generally shown a frustrating and truly "Lampedusan" resistance to change, claiming that it wants to alter its practices and habits but failing to do so. The most telling example of that resistance to change is probably the fact that the Council's rules of procedure have still not been adopted, despite the fact that that was the sixth item on the agenda of its first meeting in January 1946.

In order to help the General Assembly to take the initiative once again and to give impetus to the necessary changes in the working methods of the Security Council, the group of five small nations — the "Small Five" (S-5) — consisting of Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore, Switzerland and my country, Costa Rica, submitted draft resolution A/60/L.49. Costa Rica endorses absolutely the comments of Ambassador Peter Maurer of Switzerland in discussing the draft resolution — the first of its kind since resolution 267 (III) of 1949 — as well as those of the representative of Jordan.

Costa Rica is not motivated in its desire to reform the working methods of the Security Council by any national interest or wish for particular benefit. We are seeking a reform that brings equal, concrete benefits for all, regardless of our condition. It should lead to shared gains, not to a zero-sum situation. We believe that this is the only reform that is of everyone, by everyone and for everyone.

We have seen with interest the work done by the informal Security Council working group on documentation and procedure. It is a source of great satisfaction to us that the measures are being adopted in response to the S-5's initiative. Although we welcome them, we feel that those measures are insufficient and unsatisfactory.

First, the working group on documentation has not taken any decision regarding the presentation of reports and briefings. The presentation of reports every six months — which, for the moment, is just a suggestion; it has not been agreed to — does not in and of itself guarantee that briefings will be better. The current format of such reports is not very analytical; it is superficial and bureaucratic and designed to obscure the work of the Council, rather than to make it clearer.

We believe that it is essential — as resolution A/60/L.49 makes clear — for the Security Council to present thematic analytical reports on all current subjects, including, in particular, every time it establishes or concludes a peacekeeping operation and every time it imposes or changes a sanctions regime.

Secondly, the working group does not offer any solutions for dealing with the lack of transparency and accountability of the Council's subsidiary bodies. In particular, it does not resolve issues of lack of due process and fundamental guarantees in the work of the sanctions committees.

Nor has the working group responded to the need to create a true dialogue with the other Members of the Organization. As draft resolution A/60/L.49 makes clear, it is imperative that we establish a permanent consultative mechanism between the Security Council and the other States in order to include the contributions and needs of the latter in the decision-making process.

Finally, the Working Group has not addressed the problem of the veto. It is high time that reason prevail and that we move towards a regulation of the veto, with a view to its eventual elimination. As stated by the representative of a permanent member at the 192nd plenary meeting of the General Assembly, held on 13 April 1949,

(*spoke in English*)

> "We must reject the idea that if unanimity fails, the will of one, however arbitrary, prevails over the will of many, however reasonable. The unanimity principle cannot work where agreement is offered only on condition that the will of the most intransigent members must prevail." (*A/PV.192, p. 16*)

(*spoke in Spanish*)

With regard to this particular point, the use of the veto in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian law is unjustifiable and constitutes actual complicity in such criminal acts. Draft resolution A/60/L.49 urges the permanent members of the Council to abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter and to refrain from exercise of the veto in cases that so clearly contravene the lofty common goals of this Organization.

Some delegations have stated that the General Assembly is not competent to discuss the draft resolution presented by the S-5. Not only does practice belie this, but I would kindly invite those delegations to re-read Article 10 of the Charter, which states:

> "The General Assembly may discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the present Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the present Charter".

The limitation contained in Article 12 of the Charter relates strictly to time-frames and aims to avoid any situation in which the same subject would be considered simultaneously by both bodies. However, it does not extend to an abstract subject of general interest to both bodies, such as the issue of working methods.

Draft resolution A/60/L.49 is a polite, cautious and respectful invitation to the Security Council to make changes that would be of benefit to all. We believe that it is high time that the General Assembly send an unequivocal message to the Security Council that it cannot continue operating without greater transparency, democracy, rotation and effectiveness.

Mr. Majoor (Netherlands): I wish at the outset to thank President Eliasson for having convened this meeting of the General Assembly, thereby providing us with another opportunity to discuss Security Council reform.

I would like to use this occasion to make a few remarks based on views which I share with the Ambassador of the Bahamas, along with whom I have the privilege of serving as Vice-Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. These observations have arisen from our consultations with many delegations over the past few months.

As the debate today reflects, a majority of Member States believe that reform of the Security Council is an integral and crucial part of the overall United Nations reform agenda. Now that we are making steady progress on reform issues, the feeling is widely shared that it is time to look at the remaining assignments of the World Summit Outcome document, including Security Council reform.

Despite the growing call to deal with this reform issue, many diverging factors continue to complicate realization of Security Council reform. Some countries think the implementation of other reforms is more important at this moment. Others think the issue is too divisive. Others, although not many, are quite satisfied to maintain the current status quo.

In addition, there is another factor that is perhaps less often expressed but nonetheless deeply felt. Many Member States want to change the current composition and adapt the power structure to better reflect geopolitical realities. But they seem to be hesitant to do so in a static way: by replacing the present structure with a new, fixed power structure. Any solution should, from that perspective, reflect the fact that the world is dynamic and that today's likely candidates for a permanent seat could be different ones tomorrow.

Following from this, there is — as we see it — a growing interest in the idea of pursuing a transitional solution. Such a solution would enable some countries and underrepresented regions to assume increased responsibility for world affairs. The solution would not be an immutable arrangement, but one which may last for, say, 10 years. As such, it would considerably lower the stakes and could thus lead to greater flexibility and readiness to compromise on the substantive modalities of the reform.

One such modality is the choice whether or not to increase the number of permanent seats. Some continue to believe that the power balance in the Council can be altered only by adding new permanent members. Others believe that adding permanent members would only exacerbate the problem of decision-making. In an interim arrangement, members could serve in the Council on a longer-term basis, say five years, with the possibility of a renewal of their seats. Their longer-term presence could increase their clout in the Council.

Their contribution would be important, and it would provide them with an opportunity to exemplify their aspirations to eventually become a permanent member.

Another outstanding issue remains the right to the veto power. It is hard to imagine any solution that would involve the veto power's extension to new Council members at this point. At the same time, many countries, for different reasons, wish the veto power issue to remain on the agenda. It could be part of a temporary solution to include a path of discussions on that very issue, culminating in a thorough review after, let us say, the 10-year period.

When discussing an adaptable arrangement, other difficult questions obviously remain. What is the number of seats that will keep the Council both effective and efficient, and yet make it more representative of the larger membership? Some consider a number around 25 as the minimum required to cater to enough countries and to ensure that all regions would support the reform. Others believe that a figure around 20 is a maximum. A temporary or transitional arrangement could either make the ultimate choice between these two options, or take a more gradual approach. Some argue that we could start at the lower end, while keeping the option of adding more when the temporary solution will be reviewed.

As stated, it has proven to be very difficult to find a permanent solution to the reform of the Security Council. Many years of discussions in the Open-ended Working Group and a World Summit followed by a year of debates and consultations have not yet brought about a model that can count on a strong majority in the General Assembly.

The option of a solution of a temporary nature is coming to the forefront more and more. Prime Minister Blair has made references to that approach, as has the Secretary-General on various recent occasions. Indeed, the Secretary-General advised us in a speech in Rome: "Find a way to reach a compromise to get you to the Council table, and from there, you continue your search for a permanent solution." While the proposed permanent arrangements are still on the table in the form of draft resolutions, it might indeed be useful to also look together more closely at a transitional arrangement, where the chances of a broad agreement may be better and therefore the necessary adaptation may be realized sooner. During the interim period, discussions can and should continue on finding a durable solution.

Allow me to say a few words on the Security Council's working methods. During our consultations the Vice-Chairs of the Open-ended Working Group discerned that the majority of Member States see great virtue in reforming those methods. Such reform could be an important avenue for making the Council more transparent, inclusive and effective.

The Security Council yesterday endorsed a presidency's note on this topic. The note contains a set of measures to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work as well as the interaction and dialogue with non-Council members. The recent work in the Security Council Working Group followed the initiative of the group of five small nations — the "Small Five" (S-5) — which has greatly contributed to the debate with the introduction of its draft resolution. Both tracks have been described as processes. Certainly the presidency's note, a welcome first step, leaves further work to be done. It is my feeling that a large majority of the General Assembly would find it beneficial if some form of convergence of these two processes could ultimately be found.

In sum, today's debate proves that the issue of Security Council reform is alive. We should continue the discussion on the working methods of the Council. It is our belief that it would also be useful to inject the idea of an interim or transitional arrangement on enlargement into our consultations, debates and perhaps in negotiations. If we are daring, we can be creative. And if we are creative, we can achieve results.

Mr. Somoza (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, I would like to thank the President for convening this meeting, which enables us to debate the reform of this main body of the United Nations, the Security Council. The Council has the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security and acting on behalf of all Member States in carrying out the necessary functions to meet this responsibility.

The United Nations was created in a world that was very different from the world we live in today. Given the changes in international relations and the significant increase in the number of Members, particularly developing countries, the various main bodies of the Organization, despite the lack of formal amendments to provisions of the Charter, have nevertheless undergone significant changes in their

ways of working, of understanding and exercising their powers, and of functioning as they have adapted to modern times. The Security Council is one of the main bodies, and it has been no exception to this adaptation.

However, the number of States Members of the Organization has almost quadrupled since 1945, and this increase has not been reflected in the composition of the Council. The Council increased from 11 to 15 members via an amendment to the Charter that was approved by the General Assembly in 1963, when there were 113 Members. Now we have 192 Member States, and we feel that a new expansion of Council membership is indispensable to make that body more representative. That necessarily would give it more effectiveness, transparency and, especially, legality with regard to the decisions it takes in representation of all States.

Fifteen years of discussions and debates among the membership of the United Nations have not enabled us to reach agreement on either the nature or the content of this reform. We urge that the expansion of the membership better reflect current geopolitical realities, allowing more equitable and democratic representation of developing countries in both categories — permanent members and non-permanent members — and taking into account the agreements that the regional groups may achieve with regard to those aspects of the reform that affect their particular region. This expansion should be designed to increase the capacity to respond to global threats and challenges with a Council that would have strengthened authority and effectiveness.

The search for consensus is essential if we are to achieve that goal. During this session various draft resolutions have been presented, which shows us the current differences. But it also shows us areas of convergence. My Government supports the beginning of negotiations to unify criteria that would enable us to come to a vote in September or October, if possible.

Aspects other than the expansion of the Council should also be dealt with, such as strengthening the improvement of the working methods, which would help to strengthen the Council's effectiveness and efficiency, as well as revising the decision-making process.

In conclusion, we would like to say that consensus is fundamental for finalizing positions that give greater strength to the United Nations system as a whole. But those positions must not weaken or polarize Member States, and they must work towards creating a Security Council that is more stable and more representative and in accordance with international reality.

Mr. Barriga (Liechtenstein): We appreciate this opportunity to address Security Council reform in all its aspects, given the continued high importance of this topic for the overall reform agenda of the United Nations. We agree that United Nations reform will not be complete unless it encompasses Security Council reform. This is a good moment to revert to this topic, after having taken decisions on numerous other important reform topics, including the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council, and after recent efforts on management reform.

We attach equal importance to the questions of enlargement and working methods, in line with the World Summit Outcome. That, however, does not mean that the two issues need to be addressed simultaneously. Having dealt with the complex topic of Security Council reform in a rather intense manner in the past, and particularly during 2005, we have come to the conclusion that the Organization will benefit greatly by addressing working methods first, thereby creating the necessary momentum for enlargement and treating the two topics with the same level of intensity. It is against that background that we submitted the draft resolution (A/60/L.49) of the group of five small nations (S-5), composed of Costa Rica, Jordan, Singapore, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. As the Assembly is aware, the S-5 draft resolution has been on the table for quite some time, so this is a good moment for us to take stock.

First, we note with appreciation the strong support that many States have expressed in principle. That support confirmed our view that there is a strong need for reform of the working methods of the Security Council, and that the General Assembly has a catalytic role to play in that respect. The fact that using the word "encroachment" has somewhat become the flavour of the season makes it clear that a more balanced relationship between the Security Council and the membership at large is indeed what most States wish for.

The S-5 draft resolution addresses precisely that question. Our initiative aims at creating a more

constructive and cooperative climate and at preventing antagonistic discussions such as those that took place over the past few months. We do not think that competence and power within the United Nations are a pie that can be evenly divided between the two most important organs. Quite the opposite: improving the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council will make both organs stronger and more relevant. We believe, however, that the efficiency of the Security Council is one of if its biggest assets. But if Security Council activities were more consistently guided by the principles of accountability and legitimacy, as called for in the World Summit Outcome, its efficiency would not need to suffer. At the same time, however, its effectiveness would improve as a result of better implementation of Security Council decisions by Member States.

The Security Council has revitalized its working group on documentation, thereby itself acknowledging that change is needed. Reform from within is the ideal solution. We very much appreciative the work carried out by Ambassador Oshima of Japan as Chairman of the group. We had hoped that the outcome of the working group would have been available sooner, in order that comments about it could have been made during this debate. That would have contributed to a more informed discussion of where we stand. Our views are therefore only preliminary. We nevertheless note with satisfaction that the S-5 initiative has already had a positive impact. We hope that it will continue to do so, as there is a continued need for parallel supportive action by the General Assembly.

The importance of the reform of working methods cannot be overstated. At a time when the Security Council has dramatically expanded its field of activities and more and more relies on the political will of Member States to effectively implement its decisions on increasingly complex and far-reaching topics, a stronger reflection of the views of States that are not members of the Council is a necessity, and ultimately is in the interest of the Council itself.

As far as enlargement is concerned, quite a while ago we concluded that none of the proposals currently on the table would really succeed. Our understanding of success in that context is very strong political and numerical support that goes beyond what is legally required. We therefore need new ideas, and possibly new alliances and a stronger role for States and other actors that do not have an immediate interest in the difficult question of Security Council reform. There must be an open and sober discussion — indeed, negotiations, as has been called for by a number of speakers today — of all aspects of Security Council enlargement and the concepts of size and permanency, including in ways deviating from the ones currently established in the Charter.

More than anything else, that requires openness on the part of the proponents of the models currently on the table. Such discussions would have to be conducted under the auspices of someone who does not belong to any side. The President of the General Assembly is of course a natural first choice, but there are other possibilities. We hope that such a process can be initiated soon, because we need a modern Security Council that reflects the geopolitical realities of today, rather than those of 1945.

Mr. Bodini (San Marino): Ninety days ago we exchanged views on the reform of the Security Council. Since then, the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission have begun to operate. The United Nations reform momentum is on the roll; let us not stop now. It is obvious to us and to the vast majority of other Member States that an enlarged and more representative Council is in our best interest.

We appreciate the effort reflected in the draft resolution introduced by the group of five small nations (A/60/L.49). We believe that it is an important step towards the improvement of the working methods of the Council. But certainly it is not enough.

We are at a chilling and unproductive standstill, while impatience and mistrust are brewing among Member States. Why do we not attempt to negotiate with an open mind and, more important, with the resolve to succeed? We must find the courage to mediate this crucial reform so that everyone is at least partially satisfied. At this point we have two choices: either to continue with the existing Security Council or to create a more viable one. That choice is up to us. San Marino is committed to speedily advancing a reform of the Security Council that is fair to all 192 Member States.

Mr. Chaudhry (Pakistan): We are meeting once again to discuss the reform of the Security Council, which is an issue of vital interest to all Member States. The 2005 world summit supported the reform of the Security Council in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent, and thus to

further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions. World leaders also recommended that the Security Council continue to adapt its working methods, enhance its accountability to the membership and increase the transparency of its work. We are fully committed to working with all Member States to achieve those objectives.

Following the summit, the Assembly discussed Security Council reform in November last year. A report to review progress, as required by the Summit, was submitted by the President in December. Subsequently, in April this year, the issue was also deliberated upon in the Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. Informal consultations and the promotion of different reform proposals, both on enlargement and on working methods, have continued in various formats in parallel. New scheme ideas, particularly on the issue of enlargement, have also been informally floated and tested. The present debate is a good opportunity to take stock of the progress made on the issue and to chart the course for the future.

Security Council reform is an issue of vital national interest to all United Nations Member States. It is not surprising that, while decisions have been possible on other United Nations reform issues, we continue to search for agreement on the vital issue of Security Council reform. Indeed, Council reform has been under consideration for several years. To be effective and operational, Security Council reform should be the outcome of open and transparent consultations and negotiations should be accepted by consensus or by the widest possible agreement. Any decision promoted through self-centred initiatives, artificial deadlines and pre-emptive vetoes will be divisive and likely to be stillborn.

Security Council reform must be comprehensive. It should cover both enlargement and working methods. Indeed, several smaller Member States have declared that improving the working methods of the Council, greater transparency and accountability to the general membership are more important for them than the issue of enlarged membership. The proposal of the group of five small nations (S-5) has evoked broad support. Within the Security Council, also, consideration is being given to ways and means to improve transparency and working methods. We welcome these developments. We hope that consultations on the S-5 and related proposals, including those suggested by Pakistan, will yield agreement on significant improvement in the Security Council's working methods. These proposals should be incorporated in the eventual decision for comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

Pakistan and the Uniting for Consensus group fully endorse the view that the composition of the Security Council should be enlarged to make it more representative. Such greater representativeness will not result merely from adding a few self-nominated "new Powers" as additional permanent members of the Security Council. Indeed, those Powers themselves argue that the decisions of the Council lack legitimacy because of the overwhelming influence of the existing five permanent members. But they offer the counter-intuitive solution of adding more permanent members in the Council. Without veto rights, such permanent membership is unlikely to change the power realities in the Council. Even if it does, the vital national interests of the rest of the United Nations membership will continue to be unrepresented and therefore ignored in the work and decisions of the Council's new and enlarged oligarchy. It will not make the Council more democratic or representative.

Moreover, the new power realities of our world, 60 years after the establishment of the United Nations, are more complex. Those realities are not merely the emergence of four or five new Powers on the world stage. There are, in fact, a score or more States which are today in a position, politically, militarily, and economically, to contribute more fully and actively to the maintenance of international peace and security. For instance, the self-nominated candidates for permanent membership do not include the two largest troop contributors for United Nations peacekeeping operations. All such States deserve more frequent representation on the Security Council.

The new realities also encompass the emergence of a host of smaller States, which make up the vast majority of the United Nations membership. Their adequate representation on the Council is essential, not only to reflect and preserve their national interests but to bring their perspectives, which are often more closely aligned with the principles of the United Nations Charter than those of larger States with specific national interests and objectives that often cut across the Charter's principles and purposes.

The Uniting for Consensus group's proposal for reform of the Security Council, which has once again been eloquently outlined by the representative of Italy and other Uniting for Consensus members, constitutes an honest effort to secure a genuinely representative enlargement of the Security Council, an enlargement that could reflect the world's new realities in all their complexity. Our proposal would make it possible for each region to devise its own arrangements to ensure the representation of the large, medium and small States in an enlarged Security Council. It could accommodate the representation of regional and subregional groupings of States. This flexibility to accommodate the different and specific circumstances of each region and subregion is the principal virtue of the Uniting for Consensus proposal.

On the other hand, we understand the African position that seeks not permanent members but permanent seats for the African region. That is more in concert with the Uniting for Consensus proposal of enabling the regions to determine their own representation on the Council. We are ready to work with Africa and with Member States of other regions to promote an equal and non-discriminatory approach for all regional groups with regard to their representation on the Council.

One of the prime reasons for the stalemate on Security Council reform is the lack of serious and constructive negotiations. We have of course discussed and deliberated this issue in debates and statements, but mostly as a monologue in which we maintain our respective positions. The much needed dialogue has been missing. The Uniting for Consensus group therefore favours a constructive, inclusive, consensus approach to find a non-divisive solution based on the principle of equal participation of all Member States, be they big, medium or small in size.

There are areas of agreement on which we can build: the need for greater transparency and accountability in the working methods of the Council; the need for an enlarged membership, within a range that is widely accepted; the need to reflect new global realities and to secure equitable representation in the Security Council for all United Nations Member States; and the legitimate aspirations of various regions for a more equitable representation and role in the Security Council.

Let me stress again that the Uniting for Consensus group's approach is constructive and flexible. It seeks to promote the common interest, not just the national interests of a few States. It seeks consensus or the broadest possible agreement. And it is consistent with the basic principles and spirit of the United Nations Charter.

Mrs. Núñez Mordoche (Cuba): The Security Council requires urgent and profound reform. At the same time, Council reform cannot be an end in itself, because not even a reformed Security Council will be sufficient to ensure international peace and security. We firmly believe that the reform of the Council will be one step in the difficult and complex process of building a world order which can guarantee humanity the full exercise of its fundamental rights. Cuba considers that reform of the Council is a central aspect of United Nations reform. We cannot speak of true reform of the Organization until there is genuine reform of the Security Council guaranteeing that that organ will act in the interests of Member States, on whose behalf, according to the Charter, it must act.

With its composition and working methods, the Security Council is efficient only in protecting the interests of some of its permanent members. Moreover, when the hegemonic interest of one of its members has prevailed, as happened in the aggression against Iraq, the Council has been ignored and then obliged to accept the humiliation of a plundering war to which the majority of its members were opposed.

The Council is not a democratic, equitable or representative organ. Many of us are concerned about that fact that, while efforts are being made to establish accelerated time lines to address other reform issues, such as mandate review and managerial reform, and while new bodies such as the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission are being set up, reform of the Security Council continues in effect to be sidelined. We all know that there exists a minority group of countries that has no interest in progress towards true reform of the Council because they benefit from the current status quo. However, the vast majority of Member States attach the highest priority to such reform. That majority position cannot be ignored.

Cuba supports a Security Council reform process that is based on a broad and integrated approach that address both issues pertaining to expansion and the

working methods of the Council. Those matters should not be artificially separated and dealt with in a fragmented way, for they are closely interrelated.

With regard to expansion, we would like to reiterate our position in favour of expansion of Council membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. Cuba does not favour creating additional categories of Security Council membership. The basic goal of expansion should be to correct the insufficient representation of African, Asian and Latin American developing countries in the Council. The fact that developing countries lack adequate representation on the Security Council is to the detriment of the Council's own interest, authority and credibility. As a minimum, permanent membership should be granted to two African countries, two Asian developing countries and two Latin American countries. The composition of the Council would thus more accurately reflect the equitable geographic distribution to which we aspire. The newly created seats should have exactly the same privileges as the ones enjoyed by current members, without selective or discriminatory criteria being established. All new permanent members should join the Council at the same time. Since, at the moment, it does not seem possible to eliminate the anachronistic and anti-democratic power of the veto, new permanent members should also have the power to exercise the veto under the same conditions as the current permanent members.

The reform of the Security Council cannot be limited solely to an increase in the number of its members. It must also include a profound change in the Council's current working methods, in order to bring about true institutional transparency in its work and decision-making and a return to the functions established by the Charter. My country is deeply concerned about the Security Council's growing tendency to consider subjects and assume functions that are not within its purview, thereby usurping the role conferred by the Charter upon other bodies, especially the General Assembly.

The so-called changes made in recent years to the Security Council's working methods are in fact more of form than substance. Reality shows us that when it comes to subjects of particular importance, the permanent members — although not always all of them — continue to carry out their own rounds of negotiations behind closed doors. Fundamental decisions are often adopted outside the framework of the United Nations, and are then presented as a fait accompli to the rest of the Council members — to say nothing of the other Members of the United Nations.

We believe that the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform is the ideal framework to fully consider the various proposals that have been or will be presented, regarding Council reform, including the three draft resolutions that have been formally introduced. The delegation of Cuba finds it totally unsatisfactory that the Group has met just once this year. That situation is completely different from that of other aspects of United Nations reform, where there have been, and continue to be, frequent meetings in various formats. We propose that the Working Group carry out a programme of meetings and exchanges during the remainder of this year, with a view to making progress in the process.

Security Council reform cannot continue to be dealt with as a matter apart from the rest of the reform process of the Organization. Cuba calls for the reform of the Council to be the result of a broad process of consultations and negotiations. We will oppose any attempt to impose artificial deadlines in an effort to force decisions on proposals that are based on cosmetic rather than genuine changes. Proposals that do not guarantee truly in-depth and comprehensive reform of the Council will not have Cuba's support. My delegation is prepared to participate actively in this exercise and to contribute specific proposals.

Mr. Salgueiro (Portugal): First and foremost, I would like to start by thanking the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting. Throughout the current session of the General Assembly, several important measures and decisions have been adopted in the reform process of our Organization. Much of the credit for what we have achieved in implementing the decisions taken by our leaders last September goes to the President of the General Assembly. With his perseverance and leadership, we are responding gradually and successfully to an unprecedented challenge for a much-needed renewal of the United Nations. We have just concluded part of the management reform of the Organization. It is time now to regain focus on the political issues, and one of the most significant political issues that still needs to be addressed is undoubtedly the reform of the Security Council.

The need for Security Council reform and for adapting the international organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security to the realities of today's world is broadly endorsed among the international community. In December 2004, the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change acknowledged that "the paucity of representation from the broad membership diminishes support for Security Council decisions" (*A/59/565, para. 245*) and that there was a need to "bring into the decision-making process countries more representative of the broader membership, especially of the developing world" (*Ibid., para. 249 (b)*). The Secretary-General, in his report entitled "In larger freedom", reaffirmed that "no reform of the United Nations would be complete without reform of the Security Council" (*A/59/2005, para. 169*).

Following those two landmark reports, three draft resolutions on the question of Security Council reform were introduced in the General Assembly during its fifty-ninth session. In addition, a number of Member States declared their commitment to Council reform and put forward their concrete ideas on that issue. In September 2005 our heads of State and Government considered early reform of the Security Council an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations.

Allow me once again just to briefly reiterate the principles that, in our opinion, should guide efforts to make Security Council reform a reality.

First, reform must comprise concrete and ambitious proposals in both domains: enlargement and working methods. We fully understand and accept that in many circumstances the Security Council needs to work with discretion, but the Council acts on behalf of the international community and we all have to feel we have a stake in its deliberations. The fact is that a working culture has developed throughout the years in the relationship between the Security Council and the membership at large, as well as with the Secretariat, for which the Charter did not provide. That working culture has been a source of criticism, causing a widespread sense of frustration among Member States.

We therefore see merit in the initiatives aimed at making the working methods of the Security Council more open, transparent and inclusive, in particular the draft resolution introduced by the group of States known as the small five. We also recognize that, if implemented properly, the recently approved outcome of the Council's informal working group on documentation and other procedural questions would constitute progress in the right direction. But we believe that decisive improvement in the status quo demands action through joint structural and working methods reforms. Expansion and working methods are two sides of the same coin.

Secondly, expanding the Security Council to provide for more and better representation of the wider membership should take place through enlargement of the two existing categories of membership, the permanent and the non-permanent. Maintaining the stricture against immediate re-election of non-permanent members improves the chances of serving on the Council for the vast majority of the membership, which is comprised of more than 100 small and medium-sized States. Enlarging the Security Council along these lines will pave the way for redressing current imbalances in membership through the increased presence of developing countries in both categories and through Africa's accession to permanent membership.

Thirdly, on the question of the veto, Portugal's long-standing position is that the requirement for concurring votes, established in Article 27, paragraph 3 of the Charter, should not be expanded beyond the current permanent members of the Security Council.

Portugal believes that, whatever reforms we manage to undertake, a review exercise should take place at a given moment in the future — for instance in 15 years — in order to assess the merits of the reforms and their impact in the work of the Organization.

Finally, we think that the time for the reform of the Security Council is now. The momentum initiated in the summer of 2005 should therefore not be lost. That is why we believe that progress towards that goal would better be made early in the sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

Ms. Ström (Sweden): During this unprecedented session of the General Assembly we have taken a number of important steps to reform the United Nations. Those decisions will strengthen our ability to cope with current global threats and challenges. The 2005 High-level Meeting clearly spelled out the need for early reform of the Security Council in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent, as part of the overall effort to reform the

United Nations. We therefore very much welcome today's debate.

Sweden has called for the reform of the Security Council since the early 1990s. For the Security Council to remain the primary body in our collective security system, its legitimacy and effectiveness must be assured. Sweden believes that the Council should be expanded to include new members, allowing for stronger representation from regions such as Africa, Asia and Latin America. Any reform of the Council membership should, however, be subject to an effective review mechanism.

The Security Council must be an effective body that can act quickly and in a transparent way. We therefore believe that the power of the veto should not be extended to new members. Instead, a veto-free culture should be promoted.

Furthermore, the Security Council's working methods, its transparency and its dialogue with other United Nations bodies must be strengthened. We welcome the continued efforts to that end by the delegations of Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland, as well as the decision taken by the Council yesterday on measures to improve its working methods.

We must move forward. We now need to show flexibility and an open mind and seek solutions that can garner broad support. I can assure the Assembly that Sweden will continue to engage actively in a constructive dialogue on how to reform the Security Council.

Mr. Outlule (Botswana): The delegation of Botswana extends its deep gratitude to the President for convening a meeting on the crucially important issue of the reform of the Security Council.

In September 2005 the heads of State and Government not only pronounced their support for early reform of the Security Council; most important, they also declared it an essential element of overall efforts to reform the United Nations. In other words, we cannot pick and choose. Reforms must be broad, deep, comprehensive and meaningful.

The Chairman of the African Group — my colleague and brother Ambassador Youcef Yousfi of Algeria — has ably articulated the African common position on this matter. His statement has the full support of my delegation.

Africa has made a just demand to be represented in the Security Council on a permanent basis. That deserves serious consideration. The Council is the only organ empowered by Member States under the Charter to maintain international peace and security. Africa has obligations and an international responsibility to contribute to that noble objective.

The maintenance of international peace and security is not a matter of political and diplomatic prestige; it is a huge responsibility. It cannot, and should not, be the responsibility of a few. Africa therefore demands, as a matter of principle, to be permanently represented at the horseshoe table and to contribute to the search for solutions to problems that pose threats to our common security.

We are not demanding representation for Africa alone. We fully support the legitimate proposals by Brazil, Germany, India and Japan to be considered for permanent membership. We are strongly convinced that those countries have the capacity and commitment to contribute to strengthening the Security Council. We also strongly support the legitimate demands of other Member States for a Security Council that is more open and transparent in its working methods. Non-members of the Council, in particular small States, can bring new ideas that reflect the conscience of humankind if they have a greater insight into the Council's work.

Today we know more than ever before that peace and security are indivisible. An act of terrorism in some remote and wretchedly poor corner of the world has implications for security in the most affluent parts of our planet. We recognize that each and every one of us must do their best to combat terrorism and prevent acts of terrorism. The activities of terrorist groups have grave security implications for nations large and small, rich and poor, powerful and weak. In our approach to the question of the Security Council reform we must therefore be united by our common humanity and commitment to do good, to continuously and persistently build a more peaceful and better future for all.

The maintenance of international peace and security is a shared responsibility. It requires partnership, cooperation and mutual support among the nations of the world. It takes a village to find solutions to the most intractable problems. The delegation of Botswana therefore cannot understand why anyone would refuse the offer of assistance and support and

greater participation in addressing global security concerns. Issues of peace and security are complex. It is not merely a matter of the outbreak of war or the absence of it; it is more and far greater than that. It is about a better life in all its aspects on this planet.

The world is unanimous that democracy and good governance are global imperatives of our time. There can be no justification for demanding democracy at the national level while at the same time denying the right to democratize international institutions. It should be a source of embarrassment that here at the United Nations there is still poverty and drought as regards democracy and the yearning for a more representative Security Council, one that reflects global realities.

The reform of the United Nations should epitomize our collective aspirations for a universal and democratic dispensation. An increase in the membership should strengthen, not weaken, the Security Council. Democracy and good governance are a source of strength. The decisions of a Security Council that is more representative, inclusive and transparent would enjoy greater legitimacy, credibility and moral authority.

Forty-two years ago, in 1964, the third Secretary-General of the United Nations, U Thant, while delivering a statement on the theme "Changing world: new burdens and responsibility — strengthening the United Nations" said,

> "when we talk about strengthening the United Nations it is not from a point of view of seeking new power or greater glory but because this is an urgent necessity if the Organization and its members are not to be crushed by the great and actual responsibilities and challenges which our times have put upon them".

The reform of the Security Council is an urgent necessity. Its decisions are binding on all the 192 Member States. Yet it has only 15 members, five of whom wield the power of the veto. The status quo has no justification on the grounds of efficiency and effectiveness. That would be tantamount to justifying dictatorship or one-party-state rule on the grounds that a democratically elected parliament would be unwieldy or dysfunctional. Those are discredited ideas that have long been consigned to where they rightfully belong: the garbage bin of history.

The delegation of Botswana fully appreciates that permanent membership in the Council comes with immense responsibilities. It is not a matter of political and diplomatic prestige; it is for a higher purpose. Botswana fully recognizes that not all Member States can be represented in an expanded Security Council. Botswana is therefore willing to be represented by some of our brothers from Africa and by the wider international community who are prepared to shoulder these heavy responsibilities. Botswana stands ready to do its part as a Member of the United Nations.

Sixty years ago some countries could do without the Security Council, but today no country or nation can afford to exist in a world without it. We all need each other to address the global challenges of this millennium, such as terrorism and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Let me conclude by expressing the hope of the delegation of Botswana that Member States will have the courage to move forward in reforming the Security Council for the common good. There should be no entrenched national positions, because national interests are interconnected with global peace and security interests. In the field of peace and security there are no national interests. There are only common challenges, which require our collective efforts to overcome them. Therefore, let there be no room for procrastination and prevarication. Let us together move the reform of the Security Council forward, with a sense of urgency and a constructive spirit. Let us collectively strengthen and revitalize our global security architecture by including new permanent members. Our success in this great enterprise will not be the crowning or glorification of any State or nation. It will be the triumph of diplomacy and multilateralism.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): After 11 years if paralysis, reforming the composition of the Security Council took on unprecedented momentum in the first half of 2005. Even the Secretary-General became involved. In his report entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005), he proposed that a decision regarding the composition of the Council be taken before the holding of last September's summit, regardless of whether that were a consensus decision or not. Despite the fact that consultations are continuing, the outcome has been that we have reformed nothing.

Why has the Council not been changed? Simply because this is a subject that affects the distribution of world power. The truth is, if we look back through history, world power has been changed only as a result of great geopolitical cataclysms: wars, the overextension of empires and economic and technological decadence. The great Powers are not elected; they are born of history.

This lack of realpolitik in the approach to Security Council reform has probably been the main cause of the sterility of this exercise thus far. The unvarnished reality is that the United Nations can function and reform itself only on the basis of a realistic assessment of power.

Any Security Council reform must begin with a minimum agreement among the current permanent members and other States and must continue democratically with a broad dialogue among all States. That is the correct political methodology. We must at least begin with a minimum formula without the possibility of the veto. If we are realistic, we cannot expect that new permanent Security Council members will simply be elected by the General Assembly without a prior minimum agreement among the current permanent Council members. To fail to do that would be to ignore the political realism that demands a reform process that will affect the distribution of world power.

That said, we must state very clearly that Peru supports Security Council reform. However, my delegation criticizes the unrealistic methodology being used; we favour Council expansion through a broad consensus. In that connection, we support Brazil — among other States — as a permanent member.

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The best way to reform the Security Council is to make it effective in combating crimes against humanity. Nothing discredits the Security Council more than inertia in the face of ethnic cleansing, massive human rights violations and genocide, such as in the current case of Darfur. The Council can have more permanent and non-permanent members, and it can be, as we say, more representative; but if it does not address crimes against humanity, Council reform will be useless.

If we are to improve the Security Council's functioning in combating crimes against humanity, the five permanent Council members must reach a gentlemen's agreement never to use the veto when the Secretary-General or regional organizations request Council action to prevent or avoid crimes against humanity, massive human rights violations, genocide or ethnic cleansing. The idea is that the permanent Council members should cooperate to save thousands of human lives.

The Security Council should not only continue to put out fires when there are civil conflicts; it should also analyse in depth the structural, economic and social causes that give rise to such conflicts. In fact, all developing countries that have collapsed in civil wars and that are currently on the Council's agenda have one thing in common: all of them have virtually non-viable national economies. For example, in all of these countries, the gross national product is nearly static or growing less than the population — particularly the urban population, which, in many of them, is growing at the incredible rate of 3 per cent per year. Thus, personal incomes are declining.

In all of these countries, nearly 70 per cent of the population lives on $2 a day. The countries export very low-technology products that do not have a competitive advantage in the global economy. Furthermore, they have no food security, and there are millions of starving people; more than 60 per cent of the people in some of these countries are malnourished.

This economic non-viability undoubtedly exacerbates social exclusion. That in turn worsens cultural, ethnic and religious rivalries, turning them into terrible civil wars of national depredation in which the most execrable crimes against humanity are committed. If the Council does not take into account the non-viability of the national economies of these countries, it cannot prevent or resolve civil conflicts, because it would be ignoring the most important structural variable of the current global violence.

A recent World Bank study shows that many national reconstruction processes collapse in the first five years. The truth is that, as the High Commissioner for Refugees has said, the international community has not yet been able to effectively manage peace transition, conflict prevention and post-conflict processes because it has not placed sufficient importance on major economic and social problems. My delegation agrees with the World Bank and the High Commissioner for Refugees. We have insisted repeatedly in the Council that, if we are to make peace transition and post-conflict reconstruction processes effective, we must address social and economic

problems, which can best be accomplished by the Peacebuilding Commission. Therefore, it is essential that Security Council peacekeeping operations be accompanied by economic policies aimed at providing political and economic viability and stability so as not to run the risk of falling back into conflict.

The Security Council has always placed more — nearly exclusive — importance on political problems than on economic and social problems. In particular, we have placed importance on elections, the reform of State security structures and the creation of new armed forces and police forces. Many of the Governments resulting from elections are very fragile democracies supported by non-viable national economies. They cannot provide basic public services and, sooner or later, they collapse politically. For the same reasons, the armed forces and police forces that the Council creates end up making social demands, thus fundamentally threatening those fragile democracies.

A Security Council approach to national reconstruction that focuses exclusively on political problems and the modernization of security structures — as opposed to the modernization of the economy and social services — will not only continue to fail, but could later destabilize the weak democratic Governments that have emerged with the Council's help. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that Security Council reform ensure that Council action is oriented towards alerting and mobilizing the international community and the international financial institutions with regard to the persistence of these non-viable national economies so as to prevent civil conflict and avoid failure in cases of post-conflict national reconstruction.

Mr. Soborun (Mauritius): Allow me at the outset to express my sincere appreciation that the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council has been brought before the General Assembly.

My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made earlier this morning by Mr. Youcef Yousfi, Permanent Representative of Algeria, on behalf on the African Group.

We meet today to address once again a very important question, which is close to the hearts of Member States and to the hearts of millions of people around the world. One cannot say when we will have reached the limits of the deliberations on this question. However, suffice it to say that the wide spectrum of views expressed so far on this subject provide us with compelling reasons justifying the urgent need for reform of the Security Council. We cannot afford to continue to acknowledge a status quo situation year after year. The momentum of the process of Security Council reform should be sustained so as not to further delay the implementation of the decisions taken by our leaders at the 2000 and 2005 summits.

It is interesting to note that every time an opportunity is provided us, we do not fail to remind ourselves that we are living in a globalized world and that we need to adapt to changing circumstances, sometimes at very high cost to vulnerable groups. However, when it comes to the reform of the Security Council, established 60 years ago, we fail to apply the same logic, the same approach and the same philosophy.

Need we remind ourselves once again that, in 1945, more than half of the world's people were colonized and, as such, their countries had no power to help shape the structure of our Organization. To date, almost all those countries have emerged as sovereign States and a few have become important players on the world stage and are contributing immensely to its advancement. A couple of them are even poised to rank among the 10 strongest economies of the world in the next 10 to 15 years. Therefore, as in other forums, those voices need to be heard loud and clear in the Security Council as well, with a view to enhancing its effectiveness and the legitimacy of its decisions.

The reform of the Security Council is intertwined and interlinked with other reforms in the United Nations. However, it is my delegation's view that the reform of the other organs of the United Nations system, however good, will not achieve the desired results so long as significant changes are not made in the structure and working methods of the Security Council in a comprehensive manner.

We are witnessing an ever-increasing adoption of democratic principles all over the world, and particularly in areas where the freedoms of speech, expression and association were hitherto unheard of. That is good for the peoples of those countries, as well as for the countries themselves. In the same vein, it is imperative that the Security Council open its select club of permanent members to accommodate the legitimate claims and aspirations of an ever-changing

world to better reflect geopolitical realities and diversity, balance of power and global stability. Above all, that is what the United Nations is all about.

By delaying too long in reaching a decision on a meaningful reform of the Security Council, we run the risk of creating among the Member States a reform pessimism which, at the end of the day, could have damaging results. My delegation remains convinced that, particularly over the past 15 years, Member States have expressed sufficient views on the reform of the Security Council. It is therefore high time that we seriously consider bringing a fruitful conclusion to the debate in the wider interest of the international community.

Let us step back for a minute and ask ourselves the question: How long shall we continue to deny almost 3 billion people of the world a fair and just representation on a permanent basis in the Security Council? More importantly, why should they be denied?

It is unjust and unacceptable that Africa should continue to be denied its logical claim to permanent seats. Africa is the only continent not represented in the permanent membership of the Security Council. Furthermore, the demand of Latin America in that regard is just as fully justified. Moreover, by any criteria that may be applied, India, the largest democracy on our planet, more than deserves a permanent seat in the Security Council.

To conclude, I wish to reiterate that it is my delegation's wish that Member States and all regional groups should earnestly strive to reach a consensus on Security Council reform in order to make progress and move the process forward.

Organization of work

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I should like to make an announcement with regard to the Bureau of the General Assembly at its sixty-first regular session.

Members will recall that the President and the 21 Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly at its sixty-first regular session, as well as the Chairman of the Fourth Committee — the Special Political and Decolonization Committee — and the Chairmen of the Second, Third, and Sixth Committees, of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session were elected on 8 June 2006.

It remained for us to elect, at a later date, the Chairmen of the First and Fifth Committees. I should like to inform the Assembly that the following representatives have been elected to the posts of Chairpersons of the First and Fifth Committees of the General Assembly at its sixty-first regular session and are therefore members of the Bureau for the current session: for the First Committee, Mrs. Mona Juul of Norway; and for the Fifth Committee, Mr. Youcef Yousfi of Algeria.

I congratulate the Chairpersons of the First and the Fifth Committees of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session on their election.

As the Chairpersons of the six Main Committees and the 21 Vice-Chairmen of the General Assembly at its sixty-first regular session have been elected, the Bureau of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session is therefore duly constituted, in conformity with article 38 of the rules of procedure.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.